

ADRIAN KEMPE VAN BOUCKHOUT AND THE QUARTO NEW TESTA- MENTS OF 1536.

IN 1536 three quarto editions of the New Testament in English were printed in Antwerp. They are very similar in appearance, and have no indication of place or printer. All three contain a woodcut of St. Paul standing with a raised sword in his right hand, from whose handle hangs a pair of scales. In his left hand is an open book, and his left foot rests upon a stone. One detail separates these three woodcuts at a glance. In one the face of the stone is blank, and the edition in which it occurs is known as the 'Blank Stone' edition; in the second the figure of a mole is engraved on the stone, and gives its name to the 'Mole' edition. The third has upon the stone a merchant's mark with the initials A. B. K., and the edition containing it is known as the 'Engraver's Mark' edition. In spite of the great attention paid to these early editions, and the researches of many bibliographers, no one, so far as I am aware, has solved the mystery of the engraver's mark, and the initials A. B. K. Now this woodcut occurs again in 1536 in the following book: 'Storys and prophesis out of holy scriptur garyschede with



MOLE.



BLANK STONE.



ENGRAVER'S MARK.

THE WOODCUT OF S. PAUL IN THE THREE NEW TESTAMENTS PRINTED AT
ANTWERP, 1536.

faire ymages, . . . oursien and approuved by . . . maester Nycholas Coppyn de Montibus, Deane of Sainte Peters and Chancellor of the universitie of Louven. Anno m.ccccc.xxxv.' At the end of the book is the St. Paul woodcut with the engraver's mark, and below it the following colophon: 'This boke is prentyd in Andwarpe vpon the Lombardes walle over agaynst the golden hande, By my Symon Cowke. Anno xxxvi.' Thus though this book gives no clue to the identity of A. B. K., it adds one piece of information, and that is that some time in 1536 the woodcut was in the hands of Simon Cock, the well-known Antwerp printer.

It will be noticed that the book was overseen and approved in 1535. Now in that year Simon Cock printed a book, 'Enchiridion, compluscula eorum quae in Sacris Bibliis traduntur picturis expressa continens addito insuper textu ac mox precationibus piis e lingua vernacula in Latinam per G. de Branteghem tralatis. Excudebat Simon Coquus Antverpiae 1535.' This book was lot 281 (and so perhaps escaped burning) in the Offer sale. I have not seen a copy, but from the title it might be a Latin version of the 'Storys and Propheis,' and might also have contained the St. Paul woodcut.

The key to the riddle I found unexpectedly. I was going through the six or eight large scrap-books of wood-engravings which form part of the Douce collection in the Bodleian, when I suddenly came upon this identical woodcut on a leaf which was manifestly the last leaf of an octavo book. Below the cut was a short colophon, setting forth that the book was printed in 1537 at Antwerp by

‘Mattheus Cromme voor Adriaen Kempe van Bouckhout.’

Here was the plain solution, but who was Adriaen Kempe, and what book did the leaf belong to?

It very probably belongs to a Dutch version of the ‘Storys and prophesis,’ of which an imperfect copy was also in the Offor collection. The title runs ‘Historien en Prophecien wt der heyliger schriftueren met devote ghebeden.’ The book was imperfect, wanting the last leaf, but the title-page was dated 1537. So far we have got to the facts that Adrian Kempe was apparently a publisher, that the woodcut of St. Paul was his device, and that in 1536 he was in partnership with Simon Cock, and in 1537 with Matthew Crom. In tracing various clues I turned up in Brunet Gulielmus de Branteghem, who had translated the ‘Storys and prophesis’ into Latin, and here a new book appeared, ‘Jesu Christi vita juxta quatuor evangelistarum narrationes, artificio graphices perquam eleganter picta, una cum totius anni evangeliis ac epistolis.’ The colophon runs: ‘Antverpiae, apud Matthaeum Cromme, pro Adriano Kempe de Bouchout. Anno M.D.xxxvii. 24 Decemb.’

In the Huth Catalogue (vol. i, pp. 196-7) a copy of the ‘Jesu Christi vita’ is entered, and the following note added: ‘By whom the very artistic woodcuts in this volume were designed is not mentioned, although at the end of the preface we find some Latin verses “In laudem pictoris tabellarum hujus libelli.” In the British Museum is a copy of the book with a MS. note by Mr. W. B. Rye to the effect that the engravings are by Lieven de Witte

of Ghent, but he does not give his authority for the statement, and Nagler says nothing on the subject. The same cuts were used in an English New Testament printed at Antwerp in 1538 by Matthew Crom.'

Mr. Rye having discovered the fact and stated it, apparently preferred to leave it to the ingenuity of later searchers to find the source of his information for themselves. Had Mr. Huth's cataloguer examined more carefully the prefatory verses he would have found that they form an acrostic, and that the initial letters of the lines read downwards form the words LEVINVS DE VVITTE GAN-DENSIS.

Lieven de Witte, a painter and architect of Ghent, is of especial interest at the present time, since he is considered to have been one of the artists who worked on the celebrated 'Grimani Breviary,' preserved in the library of St. Mark's at Venice, which is now being reproduced in facsimile. According to Bryan he devoted himself to buildings and other perspective subjects, but also produced historical pictures. The windows of the cathedral of St. Bavon, in Ghent, were painted from his designs.

A French version of the 'Jesus Christi vita' was issued two years later with the colophon, 'En Anvers par Adrien Kempe & Matthieu Crome. M.D.xxxix.' Very fortunately the original privilege for the book, dated December 7, 1537, is reprinted in this edition, and we find that it was granted to 'Adrian Kempe de Bouckhout, Imprimeur de livres.'

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In 1540 Crom reprinted the French version, and in 1541 the Latin, but in the colophons of neither does the name of Adrian Kempe occur, so that after 1539 we have at present no further trace of him. It would seem that he began to work with Simon Cock at least as early as 1536, but that when Crom commenced business, which so far as we know cannot be dated earlier than 1537, Kemp deserted Cock to join him. With the data we possess so far I think we are quite justified in considering Simon Cock to have been the printer of the 'Engraver's Mark' edition of the 1536 English New Testament.

As to Adrian Kempe himself, was he a printer, a stationer, or a wood-engraver? The privilege mentioned above states distinctly 'Imprimeur de livres,' but the fact that every book in which his name occurs was printed by some one else, shows that he was not himself a practical printer.

The probable explanation is that he was a wood-engraver, who published his own work himself, getting another printer to print the necessary letterpress and to share in the venture. A somewhat similar case will be found in connexion with Albert Dürer, several of whose books have the colophon, 'Impressum Nurnbergae per Albertum Durer,' sometimes with the word 'pictor' added, sometimes without. In this case Dürer was the engraver and designer, and not the printer of the letterpress.

To return to the woodcuts of St. Paul. Many writers on the subject of the New Testaments seem to have taken for granted that the three woodcuts

were identical, and that the different marks on the stone were produced by 'plugging' or inserting new engraved pieces into the old block. Common-sense might have suggested the improbability of the cut appearing with initials in 1535, again with initials changing to a mole, and finally with a blank space in 1536, and then returning to its original condition in 1537.

On examining the three side by side it will be noticed that the A. B. K. and blank stone ones differ only in very minute details, and are at first sight identical, while the Mole cut, though copied from the same original, is much more coarsely engraved.

In 1553 the Blank Stone cut was in the possession of Hans van Ruremond, the son of the Christopher van Ruremond who died in England in 1531, and whose widow continued to issue English New Testaments, so that she may very well have been the printer of the Blank Stone edition of 1536.

One great difficulty in the way of definitely identifying the printers of Antwerp books comes from their habit of borrowing and lending each other material, and that difficulty is very noticeable in the case of these Testaments, increased by the fact that as the contents of the page agrees in the three editions, many copies have been made up with leaves which do not rightly belong to them.

Assuming Simon Cock as the printer of the Engraver's Mark edition, and the widow of Christopher van Ruremond as the printer of the Blank Stone edition, there remains the Mole edition. This

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is ascribed by Mr. Sayle in his 'Catalogue of early English books in the University Library, Cambridge,' to Simon Cock, and I have no evidence on the matter to bring forward. Living as I do in the great town on the Mersey, which, as Mr. Birrell writes, 'all unabashed now boasts its bookless self a city,' there are no opportunities of working on original sources of information.

E. GORDON DUFF.